

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

All THE YEAR Round

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JENIFER.

BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. PENDER-CUDLIP).

CHAPTER XII. MADAME VOGLIO AT EASE.

MRS. JERVOISE was spending one of her ordinary high-pressure days. Her London house was near to everything to which a society woman's house ought to be near. It was a corner house at the end of one of those rows of palaces which have sprung up on the site once occupied by Gore House and grounds. Its decoration and furnishing, the joint achievement of her husband's purse and her own taste, were magnificently perfect. There were in it grand collections of antique china, silver, and glass. But Mrs. Jervoise was not a mere collector. Each individual bit was treated as a work of art, and not huddled together with dozens of its fellows as a specimen merely. Her house was very sumptuous, but better than this, it was very beautiful and refined.

It was a morning in May, and the sun was shining, and the water gleaming, and the young green leaves and fair spring flowers were all looking their freshest and best, as Mrs. Jervoise rode across the park. She had only taken a turn or two in the Row, when a sudden resolve had moved her to leave it, and make her way along long lines of terraces and through some tortuous streets to St. John's Wood, where in one of the prettiest of the villas which abound there, Madame Voglio reposed on her well-earned laurels.

The bright fair woman with the fairy-like figure, and the golden hair, who was always capitally mounted, was an object of attention in the Row whenever she appeared there, as well as in every hunting-field she frequented. But to-day her numerous acquaintances found her rather brief, not to say forbidding in her manner. The fact

is she had much cause for silent reflection, and many reasons for wishing to have her reflective fit out undisturbed.

In the first place the doctors who were in constant attendance on her husband, had told her this morning that she must nerve herself to bear the worst, as it was a physical impossibility that Mr. Jervoise could live many weeks longer. She did not make any pretence of grieving greatly about this. There was nothing to gain by such pretence. But though she did not grieve, she was rather sorry. Mr. Jervoise had been the kindest and most useful friend she had ever met with in her life. It is not every wife who can say this with truth of her husband. But Flora Jervoise could say it, and did say it to herself. Therefore she was sorry to hear that it was inevitable that she should part with this kind and useful friend shortly. Certainly this sorrow was greatly alleviated by the knowledge she had that she would be the sole possessor of his houses and lands, horses, carriages, and indeed all things that he would be compelled to leave behind him. But as he had never been an exacting, dictatorial, or niggardly lord and master to her, her thoughts did not dwell on the absolute freedom which would soon be her portion, as rejoicingly or even comfortingly as they would have done had he been all these things.

Mrs. Jervoise, as has been said, was an active, untiring pupil and proficient expert indeed in the art of pleasure. With all her heart she loved change, excitement, and amusement. But for all this she was no mere frivolous fool of a creature, unable to concentrate her thoughts and powers on anything besides the whim of the hour.

She could devote herself for hours to

complicated business accounts, from which many a staider, graver, more industrious, domesticated, and generally praiseworthy woman would have turned aside in fear and trembling. And she would bring all her bright winning ways, and prompt power of action to bear upon any cause which interested her. As many good causes, as well as many indifferent ones, did interest her in the course of every year, she certainly may be accredited with being very useful in her generation. People who disliked her were apt to say that her zeal in good works was mere feverish love of excitement. Her chronicler will only say that it led her into the commission of many an act which called forth blessings on her head.

Her object to-day in getting away from many congenial associates in the Row, and going over to St. John's Wood to see Madame Voglio, was at least an unselfish one.

A letter from her sister, Mrs. Ray, had informed her of the facts of the break-up of the Moor Royal establishment, and of Jenifer's intention of studying for twelve months under Madame Voglio.

"It will be a great relief to me," Effie had candidly written, "when old Mrs. Ray and Jenifer part company with us. My mother-in-law is a skeleton at the feast. I know her position is a hard one, and I don't feel inclined to better it at my own expense. But if Jenifer can only succeed as a concert-singer, and make a lot of money, and so be able to make the poor old lady more comfortable, I shall really be very glad. Do all you can with Voglio; get the rapacious old cormorant a few good paying pupils who'll only want to howl in private, on condition that she really does exert herself to push Jenifer's interests with public concert-givers."

It was on this request of her sister's that Mrs. Jervoise was acting now. A season or two ago, Flora had herself taken lessons of Madame Voglio. That is to say, she had paid lavishly for singing for a quarter of an hour three times a week under Madame Voglio's auspices, and had spent the rest of the lesson-hour in entertaining Madame Voglio at luncheon, and being entertained by that lady's pungent accounts of the way in which the majority of the young ladies whom she taught agonised her exquisitely acute ear, and wrung her artist soul.

It was on Flora's advice, which had filtered through Effie to Jenifer, that the

latter had in the first instance applied to Madame Voglio. And now that negotiations had resulted in the relations of mistress and pupil being established between Madame Voglio and Miss Ray, Mrs. Jervoise was going to try what her personal influence, together with the indirect power of the purse, could do for Jenifer.

Madame Voglio was at home. She generally was at home until two o'clock; the rare exceptions to this rule being when she had pupils who were wealthy and munificent enough to pay her for the sacrifice she made in getting herself into a costume in which she would be presentable to the eyes of men at this early hour of the day.

The room in which she received Mrs. Jervoise was not the one into which pupils, or possible pupils, were admitted. The latter was a large, well-ventilated, and pleasantly-furnished apartment to which madame descended in faultlessly neat, as well as rich apparel. The sanctum into which Mrs. Jervoise—a "past" pupil—was frankly conducted, was a little room, stuffy as to its atmosphere, overcrowded with luxurious fat armchairs and sofas, carpeted with velvet-pile in every crevice, reeking with the mingled odours of fading flowers, cigarettes, scents, and essences of various descriptions, for both internal and external application, and lighted in a sultry way by two windows which were veiled by deep rose-coloured silk blinds and creamy muslins.

The ex-queen of the concert-boards was in the full enjoyment of her hour of ease, lolling back in the deep recesses of one of the plumpest armchairs, her untidily slumped feet stretched out before her on a soft velvet cushion, a French novel in her hand, and a tiny cigarette between her lips.

A large, loosely stout woman, her proportions appeared huge now enveloped as she was in a flowing blue silk wrapper, that did not restrain her in any direction. Her head was uncovered by any kind of cap, and her hair, which fell over her forehead in a ragged black fringe, and was much tangled at the back, did not conduce to the propriety and neatness of her morning toilette. Her face, broad, fat, snub-nosed, mobile, and greasy, was saved from being repulsive by its quick, changeful, humorous expression, and by that dramatic instinct which has enabled more than one great stage luminary to compel a snub nose to appear perfectly in place on the face of a heroine of classic tragedy. Madame

Voglio's personal appearance, it may as well be admitted at once, was intensely vulgar. But there was about her such intellectual force, that in her presence she compelled you to forget the vulgarity.

She rose up, adroitly sending the flowing folds of her blue silk robe-de-chambre over her carelessly-attired feet, and greeted Mrs. Jervoise with effusion. Mixture of German and French woman as she was, she spoke English with perfect purity and grace, never betraying by the faintest touch of accent that she was other than one born to the right of speaking it with native perfection. But at times she permitted herself the indulgence of being a little florid in style, after the manner of one portion of her nationality.

The cigarette went into the silent grave formed by a large Japanese pot, and the massive blue silk enveloped arms were held out towards the fragile-looking fair Diana, who came in, exquisite in the sublime austerity of a modern English horsewoman's toilet.

"My always charming Mrs. Jervoise, you are welcome to me as the breath of spring which you bring into my room," Madame Voglio began, and Flora laughed, managed to evade the impending embrace, and asked:

"Why don't you have more of that same breath in your room? Ah, madame, madame, the old story, I'm sure! You shatter your nerves with your abominable cigarettes, and then shut your windows hermetically to keep off the neuralgia," the lady who was half patroness, half pupil said audaciously as she ruthlessly pulled up the sultry-looking blind, and flooded the room with light and air by opening the window.

Madame Voglio flung the yellow-backed novel aside merrily.

"You are always the same, always vigorous and unsympathetic," she said admiringly, "and I revel in you now when you put me in a draught that makes my poor fat shoulders ache, just as I did when you used to bring tears to my eyes by the way in which you would bring all your notes from the wrong places. You shall lunch with me to-day, and tell me how many tickets I shall send you for my concert at which I introduce one of my most creditable pupils."

"I'll do both," Mrs. Jervoise acquiesced; "and you shall tell me what you can do for Miss Ray, if she is worth doing anything for."

"Ah, these young sanguine local amateurs!" madame said, sighing heavily, and shrugging her shoulders as if the subject were too painful for her to venture to approach it. "They come to me, these enterprising and brave young ladies, and they say to me, 'Madame, my master, who is the most famous teacher of singing in Little Paddington, tells me he can teach me nothing more! I have quite got beyond him, and so I thought I would take a few lessons of you, and then go on the concert-boards;'" and then, "madame continued, grasping the sparse locks on either side of her head with vehemence, "then when I tell them the truth—that they know nothing, nothing! not one single little thing that would fit them to be professional singers, they look upon me as a jealous old woman—jealous of them and their puny pipings."

"You won't find Miss Ray a fool of that order; if you tell her plainly she can do nothing, she'll believe you, and ask you if she can ever hope by hard work to do anything. I think she can."

Madame Voglio laughed.

"You thought the same thing of yourself, my sweetest friend," the jovial professional—who was, happily for herself, successful enough to dare to be candid—cried; "but," she added suddenly, "I will promise you this: I won't mislead your friend Miss Ray with the little delusive flatteries which my conscience assailed me for offering to you, a rich woman who could never suffer through them. Are you so fond of this young lady that you will—or whim—her to succeed."

"No; but I like her very well, and I want you to do all you can for her, for—for family reasons," Mrs. Jervoise said rather haughtily, for Madame Voglio was not proving as amenable to Flora's wishes as she had led Effie and Jenifer to believe the powerful procurer of places on public concert-boards would be.

"Then it is that you want to get her comfortably out of the way of somebody. Tell me. The somebody is—"

"My sister," Mrs. Jervoise interrupted impatiently; "how tiresome you are with your suggestions and innuendoes! Just listen to a prosaic statement. My sister is married to a man who hasn't half enough money to satisfy her very reasonable requirements, and she doesn't want to have her mother-in-law a fixture in her house for the remainder of her life." If Miss Ray makes an income, she and her mother will clear out of Effie's way without giving any

one the chance of reflecting upon Effie. You see I am quite disinterested. My appeal for your valuable aid in establishing this girl is quite an unselfish one."

"You are always that, my charming Mrs. Jervoise, and we shall see, we shall see. Is Miss Ray one whom one can present on the boards, or is she a wayside flower requiring a great deal of culture before it can be offered to the view of connoisseurs?"

"She's a beautiful girl, well-bred, high-spirited, fearless, and clever."

"Bah! she'll marry in a month, and I shall have my month's conscientious teaching thrown back upon my hands without result. My favourite pupil at the present moment—the one who will soon be a popular favourite, and redound to my honour—is a pork-butcher's daughter, without an 'h' in her vocabulary when she speaks, and with a style that is admirably adapted to win the gilded youth of the period to the refreshment-room bar. She will win all—all! far more than all at which she aims. She has no nerves, no humour, no artist feeling. But she has sound lungs, a magnificent voice, and the advantage of having been my professional pupil for seven years. My child, these are the gifts that repay one for giving them publicity. But we will have luncheon now, and moralise on the impossibility of making virtuous incapability succeed, and of feeding properly during those months of the year when the birds of the air are protected by the law of the land."

She rose as she said this, and shuffled out of the room and downstairs into a well-appointed dining-room, where a round table daintily set out with many delicacies awaited them temptingly.

"Ah," she murmured gratefully, falling comfortably into a chair, and beginning to eat with a zest which sent Mrs. Jervoise's appetite away to the limbo of lost things, "ah, for how many years of my life did I restrain myself, and hunger because of my voice! I have feared that one morsel more snipe might destroy me with the public for more times than I care to remember, and I have left truffled larks to be devoured by the unappreciative, when I have paid a guinea for half-a-dozen of them, in brief forgetfulness of the duty that was on me that night of singing to a remorseless, surfeited crowd at a Monday Pop. Ah, you little realise what sacrifices we artists make at the shrine of duty," she went on cheerily, helping himself as she spoke to

enough pâté de foie gras to upset the liver even of the goose that contributed most largely to it.

"And if Miss Ray does as well as I think she will, you will exert yourself to get her engagements, won't you?"

"I shall wait and see before I promise. Ah, how you cast contempt on my little luncheon; you pick, pick like a little bird. It is your fear of getting fat which makes you starve yourself. You all do it in your youth, and Nature revenges herself by spreading you out so" (she extended her arms to their utmost length in illustration)

"as you age."

"You didn't starve yourself in your youth, and you have spread," Flora said, laughing at madame's unconsciousness of her own dimensions, while she was deriding the bulk of the ordinary Englishwoman.

"I have rounded," Madame Voglio said solemnly. "See, I have not lost my waist; we see no beauty in flat surfaces. We round gracefully, gradually; your country-women widen awkwardly."

Then, finding that her guest would not be persuaded to take any more food and sustenance, Madame Voglio heaved herself out of her chair with an effort, and waddled to the door to see Mrs. Jervoise mount and depart.

MAORIS AND PAKEHAS.

Now that the Queensland Government is probably going to annex New Guinea, I for one hope that they, being so much more within reach, will manage matters better than we, with more than half the world's circumference between us, have been able to do in New Zealand. Our management somehow resulted in Hau-Hau, that terrible travesty of missionary teaching dashed with determination to cling to the land that was slipping from their grasp, which was described in *ALL THE YEAR ROUND** some four years ago.

The Maoris were worthy of a better fate. I suppose they must go, though they will leave a good deal of their blood in the veins of the colonists. Mr. Delisle Hay, who talks of New Zealand as "brighter Britain," and is far above any such weakness as "Maoriland for the Maoris," admits that they had arts and industries of no mean kind. Their

* *ALL THE YEAR ROUND*, New Series, Vol. 26, p. 151, "Hau-Hau."

dwellings, often highly decorated with carving, were far superior to Irish cabins, aye, to too many English cottages.

Their "pahs" were fortified on a system quite equal to that of Vauban. They were careful tillers of the soil; and with nothing but stone axes and shark's-tooth knives, they would cut down the huge kauri pines and shape their war-canoes with an accuracy that would stand the test of geometrical instruments. A canoe with forty or fifty paddles on a side would be driven as fast as a steam-ram or a racing-skiff. Wooden statues, picture-writing on rocks and trees, image-amulets, showed strong artistic leanings, though among artists the mōku (tattooers) ranked highest. Great was the request in which clever workers were held. Battles were fought to secure possession of them; and of several the poetical biographies are still current. To an Englishman's notions their highest artistic attainment was the making of what are incorrectly called "mats," togas, that is, of flax-fibre, some as soft as silk, some interwoven with kiwi's feathers, which were stitched in so thickly as to make the fabric look like fur. Such a robe would take several women two or three years to make it, for the kiwi's feathers are almost as thin as coarse hairs.

I for one don't think they have improved. I would far rather see a chief in his toga and mōku than dressed in a bad imitation of our costume. And they do dress nowadays. Mr. Hay tells of a young lady in pale green silk with lace trimmings, panier and train, lace collar and cuffs, pink satin bows, gorgeous cameo brooch, gold watch-chain, and lavender kid gloves. She wore a white hat looped up on one side, trimmed with dark green velvet, and adorned with flowers, a long ostrich feather, and a stuffed humming-bird. She had a huge chignon; a laced parasol in one hand, and a feathery fan in the other; and dainty boots on her little feet.

So long as she was in the Settlement this gay beauty wholly ignored all her kindred, walking in solitary grandeur, proud of her "Englishness." But when she got outside, she fell in with two or three old Maori women, as filthy and ugly as such women always are, and before long she had her silk skirts turned up, and was squatting amongst them, enjoying a hearty smoke. Such a lady is not likely to make flax-fibre mats, though she does (in spite of her grand airs) look after her husband's

cooking. You will meet her riding by his side in a blue velveteen habit, with hat and feather to match, he, too, being considerably "got up," from his white helmet down to his spurred boots; and when, next day, you accept their invitation, and call upon them, you find the fair Amazon in a dirty blanket and nothing else, squatted beside the dinner-pot smoking a short pipe. Her husband, when he comes in, will be angry, but only because she did not do honour to her pakeha guest by appearing in full pakeha costume.

Mr. Hay witnessed a strange and embarrassing ceremony; the husband actually dressed his wife in her best clothes before his very eyes; and when it was done he proudly said: "You come see common Maori, sah? You come find pakeha gentleman, pakeha lady, pakeha house! Good, good. Now you sit talk to my missee; I get pakeha dinner." That is the new style, and somehow it does not seem to have much vitality in it. What I cannot understand is why there should be so few marriages between settlers and natives. Mr. Hay speaks of a girl, "a delicious little brown innocent," who brought her husband ten thousand acres of good rich land; though, on the principle that the land belongs to the tribe, and not to the chief, I do not quite see how that could be. The main drawback is one that was equally felt of old in Ireland and Scotland—you marry your wife's kindred, and they all think they have a right to come and feed upon you in any numbers, and for any length of time. If her tribe was a large one, even the brown innocent's ten thousand acres would not go a very great way.

These dress-stories show that the veneer of civilisation is not very solid, and a great deal of the Christianity is only skin-deep. How can it be otherwise, when it is not (like ours) a thing which has been in the blood for over a thousand years, but is far newer than the muskets and the fire-water which have so sadly hastened the decay of the race.

Many a tattooed Christian still believes that the spirits of good men (in old time it was brave chiefs) have a long and toilsome journey to make to the far north, where, from a great projecting rock they leap into the sea and swim across to "Three Kings' Islands," which are the gate of Paradise. Many, too, still hold the ngarara—a beautiful little green lizard—to be awfully tapu. To throw one of these at a man is a deadly insult. Such an act nearly cost Mr. Hay his life. He

had a lot of Maoris cutting lines through the bush for land-surveying, including two pious old fellows, Pita (Peter) and Pora (Paul), who used to hold a prayer-meeting every night, and who, by their comic look, their quaint affection of childishness, and their love of laughter, reminded him of Irish peasants. One day, picking up a ngarara, he held it out to the old men, asking what it was, and threw it, saying "Catch!" when all at once they were transformed into fiends, yelling, dancing, singing their war-song. He thought at first it was a joke; but, just as they were going to fall on him with their axes, a couple of half-breeds hurried him off, crying: "Run for your life!" At night they were all good friends again, and Pita, lying by his side in camp, said: "We should certainly have killed you, in our wild passion, and then have been very sorry for it. It's all over now, for we've had time to reflect that, being only an ignorant pakeha, you knew no better. Besides, we are Christians, though we had forgotten that for the moment."

Such an anecdote shows what manner of men these Maoris are—people who not only weep in church at the pathetic passages, but laugh uproariously at anything in lessons or sermon that tickles their fancy. Mr. Hay has seen a church full of them waving their arms, stamping their feet, grinding their teeth with rage, when the treachery of Judas was being related. To such people Christianity came as a new form of tapu (taboo). They were ready for any number of rites and ceremonies, and it was only when they began to read for themselves, and to contrast the teachings of the Book with the conduct of the land-grabbing pakehas round them; when, moreover, their implicit faith in the missionary had been weakened by the coming in of rival faiths, each claiming to be the only true way, that they got to be eclectic, giving up the New Testament, in its practical portions, and sticking by the Old, because it allowed polygamy and revenge, and strictly forbade the alienation of land.

This tapu had many uses. A river was tapu at certain seasons, so as to give a close time for fish; a wood was tapu when birds were nesting, fruit ripening, or rats (delicacies in the old Maori cuisine) multiplying. To tapu a garden answered—till Captain Cook brought in pigs—far better than the strongest fence. A girl, tapued, would be as safe amid the wild licence of unmarried Maori life as if she had been

in a nunnery. Tapu was probably never intentionally broken, so weird was the horror which surrounded it. But, in this case, sinning in ignorance was no excuse; and the most furious wars were those which arose from breaking it. The sign of tapu was easily set up—a bunch of flax or hair, a bone, a rag on a carved stick, that was enough. To lift it was much harder, needing the intervention of the tohunga (priest), who, by muttering incantations, and, above all, by making the tabooed man eat a sweet potato (*kumera*), charmed it away.

Judge Maning, who years ago wrote a book called by his own nickname, *The Pakeha Maori*, became tapu through an act of humanity. He buried a skull which he saw lying with a number of other bones on the beach. Straightway his companions shrank from him; he had to sit apart at night, the food which they set before him he was to eat without touching, and when he neglected to do so they made off in a body, and warned his household of the plight in which he was coming back. When he got home the place was deserted. He held out for four days, but on the fifth he was forced to send for the tohunga, who made him throw away his clothes and pull down his kitchen.

A very convenient way of forcing the trader's hand in the early days was to put his ship and cargo under tapu. This made it impossible for him to sail away, or to have dealings with any one else than the chief who had laid him under this embargo, and who, therefore, at last brought him to his own terms. One can fancy this was a natural way of making reprisals for the fancy prices which, we may be sure, the trader would exact.

Many a massacre of whites was due to an unwitting infringement of the tapu; just as if you trespass on Lord Marlshire's covers in breeding-time, you'll find yourself subject to all sorts of pains and penalties, even though your object was the harmless one of plucking a butterfly orchis or a twayblade. The historic massacre of Du Fresne and his crew was brought about by a deliberate breach of tapu; and such outrages on native feeling were so dangerous, that Governor Macquarie, of Sydney, in 1813, tried to make every skipper in the New Zealand trade sign a bond for one thousand pounds not to ill-treat Maoris, not to break tapu, not to trespass on burial-grounds, not to kidnap men or women. His efforts were fruitless.

Maoris were fine sturdy fellows, and though there was, as yet, no Kanaka labour-market in Queensland, no Queensland at all in fact, a ship that was short-handed was very glad to get some of them on board by any kind of device. The worst thing connected with the carrying off of native women was that the poor creatures were generally put ashore in some other part of the islands, i.e. among enemies. There slavery, or worse, was sure to be their fate. Hence more than one massacre. A captain carried off a chief's daughter, and left her two hundred miles down the coast, where she was made a slave of and finally eaten. What more natural than that the chief and his people should feel deadly hatred against all whites, having, as savages always have, the firm conviction that all whites belong to the same tribe, and therefore ought to suffer for one another's faults? Another cause for bloody reprisals was the treatment of the men who were taken on board. "I'm a chief," said one who was being driven with a rope's-end, when incapable through sea-sickness, to some menial work. "You a chief!" scoffingly replied the master of the Boyd, for that was the name of the ill-fated ship. "When you come to my country you'll find I'm a chief," was the reply. The Boyd happened to sail into the harbour of Whargaron, the very place to which the flogged chief belonged. He showed his tribesmen his scored back, and they vowed vengeance, for even a blow to a chief is an insult that can only be wiped out with blood. The captain and part of the crew, leaving some fifty souls in the ship, went ashore to select timber. The Maoris waylaid and murdered them, and, dressing themselves in their victims' clothes, went at dusk to the ship, climbed on board, and killed every one except a woman, her children, and a boy who had been kind to the chief during his distress. The vessel was plundered, and the chief's father, delighted at securing some firearms, snapped a musket over an open barrel of powder and was blown to pieces with a dozen of his men.

Tapu was successfully broken by the early missionaries in the Bay of Islands. One of their settlements was up the Kerikeri river, the tapu of which for fish during the close months was very vexatious to them, for it blocked up their only road to Te Puna, the head station. Stores must be had; and at last, in defiance of tapu, they manned a boat and rowed down, amid the

rage and terror of the Maoris, who expected to see them exterminated by the offended atua (spirits). When the mission-boat came back it was seized, and the crew bound ready to be slain and eaten. Happily, to eat the stores seemed the proper way of beginning, and these stores were partly tinned-meats, jams, etc., and partly drugs. Having greedily devoured the former, the plunderers duly fell upon the latter, finishing off the jalap, castor-oil, salts, and so forth, as part of the ceremony. The result may be guessed. The "mana" of the missionaries began to work mightily, and with grovelling supplications the anguished Maoris released their prisoners and besought relief. The whole tribe was converted. How could they help it? Had not the gods of the stranger proved their superior might by utterly disabling those who had stood forth as the avengers of their own insulted deities?

This was a far different result from that which befell Du Fresne. De Surville, who came while Cook was making his survey, had not left a good impression. He had been most kindly received; his sick, kept ashore by a fearful storm, had been carefully tended. But, after the storm, a boat was missing, and he, thinking the natives had stolen it, inveigled the chief on board, put him in irons, and sailed away after destroying the village. The chief pined for his wife and children, and died a few days before De Surville was drowned in the surf off Callao; but the transaction was remembered against the Wee-wees (French). Two years after, Marion du Fresne came to a different part of the island. For a month he and his crew were treated like gods. Then, suddenly, Du Fresne, and sixteen others, were killed and eaten, and Crozet, the second in command, carefully drawing off the sixty survivors, wasted all around with fire and sword, and sailed away, reporting that the massacre was wholly unprovoked, and wishing to name Cook's Bay of Islands Treachery Bay in memory thereof. Not till 1851 did the truth come out. Sir G. Grey was then governor, and hearing that some Frenchmen were shipwrecked on the west coast, he sent Dr. Thompson to help them on to Auckland. Some two hundred natives had gathered to assist the French, and, in the night, Thompson heard old men telling why the Wee-wees had been eaten, twenty years before. Du Fresne had ill-repaid the month's exuberant hospitality. He had cooked food with tapued wood, had

cut down trees in which, after Maori custom, the bodies of chiefs were temporarily slung ; and when remonstrated with he had put chiefs in irons and burned villages. The French story that it was a relation of the chief carried off by Du Surville who had eaten Du Fresne was wholly wrong. Du Fresne bore his own trespass, and died in his own iniquity (the very word, for it means unfairness). Dr. Thompson was sure, from internal evidence, that the Maoris were telling truth.

" Mana," by the way, means influence, prestige, authority, good-luck—all these together. It may be possessed by inanimate things; a "mere" (greenstone axe) had mana, like Excalibur and other charmed swords. A chief's mana waxed or waned as his power grew more or less; and when it left him there would be some portent, like those which ushered in the death of Julius Cæsar or Brutus. Connected with the idea of mana was the reverence for rank. The chief was inferior to the head chief or king, who could trace his lineage to the chiefs of the little band which came across from the mythic Hawaiki, and peopled the islands. Chiefs worked at any task, not servile, as hard as their slaves. The slave (often a captive of noble birth) might by valour and conduct rise to high position. There was no remnant of a servile race, though ethnologists suspect admixture with some melanic people, especially among the few Maoris in Stewart's Land and Middle Island. A white man was valued according to his supposed position; if he was not supposed to be a rangatira (nobleman) he was of little account, unless, indeed, he had muskets, the ownership of which gave great mana. Mr. Delisle Hay, in his delightful Brighter Britain, gives an amusing instance of how a ball-room quarrel was prevented by playing on the Maori feelings about gentility. To a bush-ball came a number of Maori belles, and also "Miss City Swell," who had never before been out of Auckland. The latter, whose head was turned by flattery, roundly said that she was disgusted at the attention paid to "those brown wretches," and she would not dance with anyone who chose to dance with them. Here was a pretty business! Some kind friend, of course, repeated the injudicious remark to the native girls, and they went off in a body, followed by their brothers and cousins. "They were not going to stay where they were to be insulted in that manner." There they were down by the river, waiting for the turn

of the tide to go back to their kainga (village). Happily an old colonial came in in time to hear their grievance, and to say: "Ah, poor creature, she's not rangatira. It's a pity she gives herself such airs when her parents are only kukis." "Oh, if that's it," replied a chorus of sweet voices, "we'll go back. We are ladies, and don't mind what common persons say or do," and so the ball went on.

All these gradations of rank, all this tapu and mana, were kept up by a strong belief in the supernatural. Perhaps the most remarkable instance is that dying through horror at having broken tapu, which reminds one of the voluntary dying so common among the Sandwich Islanders. A chief's slave, a fine brave fellow, honoured by being allowed to fight at his master's side, ate unwittingly after battle some of the chief's food, thus grievously breaking tapu. When told of his trespass he fell ill and was dead in a few hours. The tohunga (priest) might be of any rank, or of either sex; some unusual power, ventriloquism, or what among us makes a man able to work a "medium," or what the Scotch call second-sight, marked out the tohunga, and a few successful utterances sufficed to make him or her famous. Ambiguous he was, as a Greek oracle. "A desolate country! a desolate country!" was the reply to a consulting war-party. They went out in high hopes, and were slain to a man. It was their own country that the seer had meant. Judge Maning tells of a spiritualist meeting at which he was present, where a young chief, lately dead, was brought back with such thrilling effect, that his betrothed, in spite of the efforts of her brothers, killed herself that she might go away with him into the spirit world.

Such was the race to which, like a seamist taking solid shape, Cook's ships and crews appeared just one hundred and fourteen years ago. He was not the first; there were French and Spanish tales of a large South land, which may have been Madagascar, certainly was not New Zealand, for the inhabitants used bows and arrows; and then in 1642, Tasman sailed from the great island now known by his name, and anchored in Golden Bay, as it is now called. He never landed; the Maoris came alongside in canoes, and attacked a boat which was passing from one ship to the other. Three Dutchmen were killed, one of whom the natives carried away; Tasman gave them a broadside, shooting down a man who stood in the prow of the fore-

most canoe holding an ornamental spear, and then sailed away. Cook, the Whitby collier-lad with a craze for mathematics, who forced himself into notice by publishing while on survey off Quebec some observations on an eclipse, took with him his tame Tahitian, Tupia, and landed at Taranga, beginning by shooting a chief who was not to be daunted by several volleys fired over his head. This was on a Sunday; next day, seeing a gathering of chiefs, each with his green-stone mere, he and Sir J. Banks and Dr. Solander took Tupia with them and tried to get up a conference; but Tupia's harangue did not move them to friendship. "Go away," was their reply; "go; what have we to do with you?" Cook offered beads, and iron of the use of which they knew nothing; but what they wanted were a musket and a hanger, and when these were refused, they became so importunate that one had to be killed and the rest peppered with small shot. But Cook would not be baffled; he tried to seize a canoe's crew, and when they resisted four were killed, and the other three (one a boy of eleven) leapt into the water and were captured. "I am conscious," says Cook, "that the feeling of every reader of humanity will censure me for having fired on these unhappy people; and it is impossible that on a calm review I should approve it myself."

The three captives, after being consoled by Tupia, were dressed and put ashore, but soon came rushing down beseeching that they might be taken on board again; they had been landed in an enemy's country, and were in fear of being killed and eaten. Even when they were restored to their people it was found impossible to make peace. A chief whom one of the boys claimed as his uncle, took two green boughs, one of which he handed to Tupia, the other he laid on the body of the man who had been shot in the conference, showing plainly that what had begun with killing could not end peacefully. Cook, who sadly wanted provisions, was disappointed and named the place Poverty Bay. Nor had he much better success till he got to Tolago Bay. Here chiefs came on board, fearlessly staying all night; fish and sweet potatoes were readily provided; Sir J. Banks was allowed to botanise unchecked; a war dance was got up in the visitors' honour. "We have found the *terra australis incognita*," was the feeling of all on board, and what most astonished the scientific men was the exceeding neatness of the

Maori sanitary arrangements. "Their gardens," writes Banks, "are as well tilled as those of the most curious people among us. This place Cook called the Bay of Plenty; and thence he sailed about, surveying, ascertaining that Middle Island was cut off from its northern sister, peppering impudent chiefs with small shot, patting children on the head (this was remembered of him by a chief who was alive in 1850—Maoris are sometimes very long-lived), admiring the skill with which the pahs were fortified, taking possession of the whole land in King George's name, leaving pigs and fowls (which multiplied), sheep and goats (these disappeared), and potatoes—far more in nutritive fare (though of easier cultivation) than the fern root or the sweet potato. He thought them a fine race, not without chivalrous feeling. He was right; in bitterest war, if the men of a besieged pah had eaten up their food, their foes would give them some, while, as to drink, they were of the same mind as Duke Robert when Henry proposed to force William to surrender by cutting off his water-supply. I have often wondered, when going over a British pah, on the Wiltshire downs or the Cornish moors, and finding no trace of a well, whether the same courtesy went on here in old days; whether Icenian would allow Catyeuchlanian to come out and fill his water-vessels and go inside his defences unharmed. The gentlemanly bearing, too, of the Maoris impressed Cook as it must impress everybody, that is, until in manners and feeling they are degraded down to the level of the mean whites, who for more than a century were the chief pioneers of civilisation among them.

That such a race should be doomed seems very hard, and harder still that the doom should be wholly due to the white man. Evil diseases (brought in before Cook's day, by some unknown ship, probably lost on her way home), drink, and above all firearms, did the work.

The exterminating effect of the latter cannot be measured without knowing how Hongi, determining to make himself in Maori land what King George was in Britain, brought in firearms, and shot down his countrymen wholesale. With us gunpowder has, perhaps, made war less deadly; with the Maoris it is quite the reverse, for the killing did not cease when one tribe was beaten. It went on to the bitter end, the musket giving fearful power. But of this

and of the after fortunes of the island by-and-by. In these days of dear meat, one can scarcely know too much about a country where there are twenty-seven sheep per head to every inhabitant.

THE ICE HARVEST.

A COUPLE of centuries ago, or less, a ton of ice would have been readily bartered for a few lumps of sea-coal. The fuel had its market value, while the congealed water was a worthless encumbrance. Not merely our recent forefathers, but the ancients also, regarded ice either with indifference or with fear and dislike. It was an accessory of pinching, dreaded winter. It impeded navigation, made the streets dangerous, and was an affliction to the shivering housewife. As for deriving any benefit from so odious a phenomenon, no one dreamed of it. A few scholars were aware that the Greeks and Romans had cooled their Falernian or their Chian wine in summer with snow from the mountain-tops. A few travellers reported that Turks, Arabs, and other misbelieving and turbanned persons, in the Land of the Morning, refrigerated their sherbet, or, sometimes, the forbidden grape-juice so dear to Hafiz, by a similar process. But even the skilful surgeons who, when Charles the Second had his fatal fit of apoplexy, tortured the Merry Monarch, like a Red Indian at the stake, never thought of ice, which, from what we read of the symptoms, might have done the royal patient some good. And even if they had thought of it, there was no ice to be had for love or money in all England. The age of jocular tenures, when a fair estate was to be held by serjeanty of a snowball on Midsummer Day, and a red rose at Christmas, was over. Nobody thought of husbanding a substance so useless, so vexatious, and so ephemeral as that ice, the production, collection, transport, and distribution of which now afford bread to toiling thousands, and necessitate the employment of a flotilla of lighters and a fleet of screw-steamers, of caravans of waggons, and ponderous rolling-stock on many railway lines.

The first ice-houses date only from the eighteenth century. Very few of them existed before the reign of George the Third, and of such as there were, most had been built in great men's parks to provide the means of icing the new wine called Champagne, after the new-fangled method

of the French aristocracy in Paris. Presently, perhaps about the time when Corunna was fought, some shrewd London fish-mongers began to realise the fact that their perishable wares would be the better for ice. Next, there set in a rage for cream-ice, for water-ice, for icing everything, from bottles of hock to the heads of fevered patients; and winter ice was heedfully hoarded, and rough Norwegian ice brought over in the lobster smacks. Then the Wenham Lake Company reaped well-earned dividends by the first systematic effort, on a large scale, to produce what everyone wanted, and America for years ruled the market, even in India, where every regiment and every station had for a century depended on the shallow trenches and the bundles of wetted Sâl twigs or thorn-boughs that are sure on clear dry nights to be thinly coated with the coveted commodity. Perhaps the finest ice now to be bought, and the most massive, comes from the artificial fiords in Norway, great glassy blocks of transparent crystal, huge and solid as the Herodian masonry of the Temple of Jerusalem.

But, needful as ice is, as a requirement of our modern civilisation, the first essential is that it should be cheap. The magnificent specimens produced by artificial culture, sawn into blocks, like Carrara marble, and sold by the cubic foot, are, compared with the commoner sorts, what high-priced Château Margaux and Château Lafitte are with reference to the humble clarets which make up the bulk of the exports from Bordeaux. In England the Norfolk Broads, carefully farmed for that purpose, yield a large supply. Belgium, that rich, populous, and busy little kingdom, not merely furnishes itself with ice, but supplies the north-western departments of France with vast quantities of ice, collected in a far more romantic fashion than is possible amongst flat plains and shallow meres. High above the corn-lands of the Low Countries on one side, and the Rhine valley on the other, rises the strong backbone of the Ardennes, with its miniature mountains, savage gorges, leaping cascades, and lofty moors, and there, at Spa, lies the dépôt of the ice traffic for a considerable portion of Continental Europe.

The ice-winner, like most skilled workers, is, in his way, a specialist. Summer is his idle time, his period of enforced inactivity. He may, like his neighbours, bear a hand in the hayfield, or help to carry home the oats, but a long, sharp, and early winter is

the sort of season for which he prays. When it comes, in all its rigour, blocking the lanes, and putting a stop to agriculture, then is the chance for the husbandman whose crop is the harvest of ice. He is, himself, always a peasant, one of those petty freeholders who work harder, and fare worse, than the rustics of any other land in Europe. But his freehold is very small, bought, as it has been, by his father or grandfather, at about the price of a hundred pounds an acre, and it just keeps the two lean cows, and the few gaunt pigs, and the mare and the foal, and the pallid, hardy children above starvation pitch. But clothes and comfort, the doctor's drugs for the sick girl, the means to keep bright-eyed Eugène at the Liège University, the annual savings, depend on ice. And he who seeks to make or supplement a living by the sale of ice must not only be robust, bold, and tough of constitution, but needs to be a petty capitalist. There are hay-waggons and teams of horses to be hired from farmers whose nags and hinds are earning nothing while frost locks up the soil. There are men to hire, to teach, and to keep steady, helpful, and good-humoured in the most trying weather, and during the severest toil. The ice-winner—Gagneux is his name, in Walloon *patois*, though he is very frequently described as "Maitre Coupeur"—needs to possess a good many of the rough merits that went to the making of an old sea-captain of the Elizabethan era. The first and indispensable requisite is, that he should know the high moorland, as well as ever pilot or channel-groper knew the salt water between France and England, rock, shoal, and current. And it should be known that he knows it. Life is dear to us all, and labour, carried on among the wilds of the bleak Ardennes, fifteen or sixteen hundred feet above the sea-level, and exposed to every gale that blows, is certainly not lacking in the element of danger. Dwellers in the valleys shudder when they talk of the "fanges," of the desolate, wolf-haunted uplands, in mid-winter. There, the rural postman goes armed. There, around every lonely moorland farm, bark and snarl fierce dogs, with sharp spikes studding their collars, because of their cousins that lurk in the heathery ravines to snap up whatever prey is left unguarded. "Pig first, child next, then dog!" is the Walloon estimate of the predilections of a wolf. But snow is more to be feared, in the high Ardennes, than wolves are, terrible as it is to the lonely

wayfarer, at sunset in January, to see black specks rapidly advancing across the trackless waste of white, or to be dogged through the forest by a persistent something on four feet, that slinks, and lags, and crouches, waiting only for a stumble, or a sign of fear, to dash upon the victim it has marked. Wolves in Belgium, after all, do very little harm. Some five or six human lives in the year—those of broom-makers chiefly—compose a fair average. But cold and hunger slay their scores. Whole households have been known to perish, amid the far-off wastes, when deep drifts lay between their cottages and the nearest place where bread and brandy could be bought, while the rescuers, whom pity has tempted to explore the distant passes of the moorland have sometimes been surprised by a tourmente, as in the Jura, and paid the penalty of their rash chivalry. "They that go to the fanges in the snow, are not sure to come back," says a local proverb. Yet the ice-winner—the Gagneux—must go, and that in the most trying of temperatures.

To be weatherwise is almost as much a necessity of life to the man of ice as is local knowledge. Were he not reputed to know the causeways that lead to every morass, the hummocks of firm ground, and the springs which, in that region of mineral waters, are warmer or colder than others, the mothers would not trust him with their sons, nor the farmers with their horses. But he requires, also, to keep a keen eye on the signs of a possible snow-storm, and it suits him better in the long run to lose days and days, and to run the risk of thaw, than to get his horses and his men involved in the risk of a tourmente, locally known as a "trouble." What suits him best is the fine, clear cold that sometimes comes in winter, and sometimes in spring, when he can reap his harvest in the chilly sunshine. Then he is active indeed. Long before dawn, long after dark, the waggons rumble along the well-kept high-roads, or strike off into the stony lanes. The bells on horse-collars jingle merrily, as if the crop to be won were golden wheat or bearded barley. The men—three or four—who trudge sturdily beside the horses, wear fur caps with flaps and ear-pieces to enable them to bear the cutting blasts; always have a red handkerchief put on, turban fashion, under the fur cap, with vest and jerkins of knitted wool; and are shod with tremendous boots, well greased, that are to save their feet from frost-bite. They are all strong young

fellows, except the Gagneux, their captain, who, with grizzled hair and anxious eyes, heads the expedition. They have picks and shovels with them, and a hatchet, and iron grapnels and coils of rope, and a couple of light planks—life-buoys, these last, to be flung down in dangerous places among the fathomless quagmires, where a warm sulphurous spring makes the ground treacherous to the tread.

Whether the Gagneux's trade is easy, or the reverse, depends very much on the rainfall and the setting in of the frost. When there is sharp cold with a clear sky, and after months of rain, fifty or sixty waggon-loads of ice may be cut, loaded, and delivered at the railway-station of Spa by the different contractors in the course of a short winter's day, and without serious peril to life or limb. The ice then comes from pools nestling among the spurs of the hills, or from actual sheets that envelop the northern sides of the rolling, heathy uplands. But in years when the mercury runs, as so often happens, quickly up and down the tubes of barometer and thermometer, the ice-winner must go further afield. He gets a better price for his wares, but he earns it by risk, and pain, and cruel exposure to cold such as in England is all but unknown. And it makes the utmost difference to him whether his biting weather comes at Christmas or in Lent. Ice-merchants in the capital, like other traffickers, cannot afford to be sentimental. The commodity offered has to compete, as to cost, if not quality, with artificial ice like that of Wenham Lake, or that which is born of freezing mixtures, air pumps, and the evaporation of ether. What suits the Gagneux is what our American cousins call a "cold snap" towards an early Easter. For, as ice is roughly reckoned to lose forty per cent. in a dry climate, and sixty in a damp one, spring-won blocks rule higher in the market than those which have to drip and waste through possible months of fog and wet. The mid-winter work in snowy years is the wildest and the worst, for then the adventurers must wend their way to swamps abhorred of herdsmen, where in the early autumn many a rider following the hounds plunges suddenly to his saddle-girths in the black mud. There are quaking pits in such morasses, near which may be seen rude crosses in unhewn stone or tarred pinewood with "Priez pour lui" scrawled on a weather-beaten board, and wreathed around with garlands of heather

and faded wild-flowers, which mark the nameless grave of some wayfarer or shepherd.

Formidable as are the bogs of the high uplands towards the Prussian frontier, they are to the ice-winner what the Arctic Sea used to be to the Hull whalers—a source of profit. Knowing, as he does, the ground, as well as the tossing snow-waves and the fast-flying flakes permit him to recognise the landmarks, he tries to keep to the firm ridges and to shun the dreadful "fondrières," some of which are deep and tenacious enough to swallow down his whole company, team, cart, and all. When the pool is reached, he it is who ventures first along a narrow tongue of land, to step forth upon a jutting stone, crusted with snow and slippery with moss, and to begin the attack upon the thick marble-hard ice, as a leader should do. There is an art in ice-cutting, as in most occupations, and much tact is needed to get the maximum of weight chopped, split, hauled ashore, and swung into the waggon, with the minimum of pick and shovel work. A clever thrower of the grapnel, to bring in floating blocks from a distance, is as much prized as an adroit harpooner at sea. Often it is necessary to wade; and that in half-congealed water, and clinging mud, and mire of bird-lime tenacity. Sometimes a precious hour is lost in the process of extricating an unlucky comrade who has sunk to his armpits in the swamp, and now and then a novice can scarcely be kept from nodding drowsily off into the sleep for which exhausted Nature craves in the bitter cold, and from which there would be no awakening in this world.

Frost-bite is seldom severe, but blisters and temporary blindness from the glare of the white waste are not uncommon; while the sudden setting in of a snowstorm may in a moment spoil the day's harvesting, and task all the prudence and strength of the explorers to struggle back to the safe road. No Gagneuse has ever yet carried on his business on teetotal principles. Bad brandy and worse gin are always heedfully stored in a basket, slung beneath the waggon, and frequent, if moderate, drams are doled out as the work goes on. But the great inducement to volunteers is the daily half-crown, for three francs in the Ardennes is a sum that represents princely pay.

There are two qualities of Ardennes ice. The Number One, the first-class ice, comes

from pools and lakelets which some steep ridge protects from driving snow. For the cutting of this hard transparent stuff, eight or ten inches thick, and almost equal, save in metric symmetry, to the best blocks from Norway, there is keen competition. The earliest in the field has, by tradition, a right beyond dispute. Hence every Gagneux tries to be more matutinal than his rivals. The early bird, in human shape, is he who is privileged to quarry the superfine sort of clear ice which may be fit for table use. But for every ton of this, twenty of the second quality find their way to market. The inferior ice is often in jagged masses of extraordinary solidity, sometimes sixteen, and even eighteen inches thick. But they are dull, opaque, and of a snowy colour, layer after layer of pure ice alternating with spangles and patches of drift, so that the whole has the aspect of a slab of white conglomerate. This ice, as containing more air, and as less compact in substance than the transparent, is said to lose considerably by storage; but that it is in great and constant demand is shown by the anxiety to get it safely off as fast as steam can urge the iron wheels along the iron road, to Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent, and Lille.

The gleanings of the ice-harvest, when once the pools and lofty-lying tarns have been denuded of their thick crust, and a decided thaw has set in, are of a far humbler sort, and consist of dingy snow, beaten hard into compact blocks by the blows of shovel and mallet, packed into common carts, and stowed away in the ice-cellars of local restaurateurs and café-keepers to await the demand for sorbets and cream and water ices during the ensuing summer. But with this the Gagneux has nothing to do. Snow is to be had without peril and for scanty toil, and is paid for at a tariff correspondingly low, and is therefore beneath the attention of the bold adventurer, who has laboured, schemed, and faced danger for months in the interest of his family. Now he has given back horses and waggon to their owner, has disbanded his crew, and awaits, like a philosopher, by his chimney-corner, the chances and the changes of a new year.

TWIN SOULS.

SOME kindly look, some undefined expression
Lurks in the shadow of thine earnest eyes,
Some secret thing that claims my heart's possession
By sympathetic ties.

Some likeness of the mind, some fellow-feeling,
Blends our cleft lives to one harmonious whole;
Thy good unto my better self appealing
Haunts all my inmost soul.

Wordless, yet ever to my thoughts replying,
Giving me look for look, and breath for breath;
With thee the world is paradise undying,
Without thee—Life is Death!

ALONG THE SILVER STREAK.

PART V.

CONTANGO did his duty well that day. The milestones spun away behind him. To be sure, they only marked kilomètres, nine little ones in between to mark each hundred mètres, and the tenth on a larger scale, where the distances to different places had been carefully marked on, and as carefully knocked off by some travelling enthusiast, some Old Mortality whose ideas had become reversed, and who had devoted himself, with cold chisel and mallet, to the disfigurement of these local records. Disfigured they were, anyhow, with remarkable completeness, and the want of any authentic record of our progress caused a little discord among us. Originally we were the most charmingly united party you can imagine. The director's wife, the shock of separation from Alphonse once over, threw herself into the enjoyment of the hour like a school-girl just released from class. The day was fine, the road smooth and shaded with trees. We caught glimpses here and there of the blue sparkling sea—glimpses now through the branches of apple-trees studded with young fruit, or crowning the vista of some shady lane almost equal to a Devonshire lane in beauty; and every now and then, as a wider prospect opened out from the summit of some trifling eminence, we gained a view of the whole bay, dotted with white sails, and could make out the graceful Sea Mew steaming along in a leisurely fashion. Once or twice Stéphanie thought she could make out her director anxiously gazing landwards, and waved her handkerchief zealously, on the chance of his being on the look-out our way, at that particular moment, with binoculars of extraordinary power. Altogether, we were as happy and contented as people could well be, Contango slashing along at a pace that should have troubled the repose of people who intended to bet against him, Tom making all kinds of fun with Justine on the back seat, while the pair in front were more soberly employed in comparing impressions on what was passing. Now,

Tom had set out very carefully to time Contango's performance, and for the first two or three kilomètres this went on with complete regularity. Then he missed a milestone—to call it by the familiar name—and to conceal his want of care he stuck in two which had really no existence, thus bringing up Contango's record to something astonishing. Now, if the distance on the milestones—still to use the familiar term—had been properly marked, we could have decided the real distance travelled without any discussion; but, thanks to Mortality Redivivus, we were in a complete fog about the matter. Presently, however, we arrived at a village—St. Marcouf—where we were able to correct our dead reckoning.

All along this district, the villages are nearly all either something-ville or Saint somebody; and, indeed, throughout Normandy the same rule holds good, the ville in most cases, no doubt, being an adaptation to French of sundry Saxon and old Norse terminals. Vic, wic, feld, bye, have apparently been all melted down into the French ville. So, at least, our director instructed us in a little disquisition upon the subject. But the weather was too hot for such considerations. The merits of the church, which is ancient and singular, were in our eyes chiefly the pleasant coolness and calm it afforded. The spire of St. Marcouf is, they say, a sea-mark for the fishermen and sailors in the bay, and a curious opening or oculus in the chancel over the high altar was said to have been contrived so that the altar-light burning always in presence of the Blessed Sacrament might throw a cheerful gleam out to sea, giving the sailor struggling with the waves a hopeful sense of the eye that is watching over his safety. We might also have drunk from the ancient fountain of St. Marcouf, but the spring was pronounced to be too near the village cemetery, and so we voted for the village cider, although, perhaps, in that we had still more concentrated essence of the forefathers of the hamlet. For do not apple-trees grow in the churchyard itself? and what is not apple-juice in the cider is made up from the holy well.

At St. Marcouf we were encouraged by finding ourselves hard upon the trail of Hilda and the count. They had passed through the village not an hour before—the tall mademoiselle, her father, and the young De St. Pol. Mademoiselle stopped to see the church. She was there half an hour at

least, and the count seemed very impatient at the delay. There was a long discussion among them, too, as to where they should go; the count urging them to cross the isthmus and visit Coutances and Granville, where he had his yacht; and promising to show them the coast of Brittany. But mademoiselle had decided at last—it was she who seemed to decide things, the old gentleman, her father, took no part in the discussion—mademoiselle had decided that she would go on instead to Bayeux. And then they had started, the count in a bad humour it seemed, and no doubt we should overtake the party before they reached Carentan. So we drove on, reassured by what we had heard, and not putting Contango to his tip-top speed, for Bayeux would be the general rendezvous; the Sea Mew was to put in at Port au Bessin, where there was a good harbour, which would take her in handsomely at full tide.

Thus we drove on towards Carentan, the country gradually becoming flatter and flatter, and finally resolving itself into rich low-lying pastures, protected from the network of streams that intersected them by high grassy banks, lined with willows, and elms, and tall poplars, with legions of cattle quietly grazing—a picture after Cuyp, of the Dutch rather than the French school. These wide-spreading pastures are the wealth of this rich district of the Cotentin, the country whose proud barons disdained to call themselves the men of the young bastard William; but who were speedily brought to submission by the embryo Conqueror. This and the subsidiary Avranchin, with its chief town of Avranches—the two districts together under the old régime forming the baillage of Coutances—these two districts have been the great nursery of the ancient English baronage. Just now we might call it a hot-bed rather than a nursery, the heat is so intense, with hardly a breath of air stirring over the plain, where the tangled rivers and streams are lying at rest, with scarcely a movement in their waters at the bottom of their deep muddy channels. A bountiful country too, with evidences of plenty and profusion on every side.

We find Carentan in the full fever of its weekly market—and such a market as you will rarely see in these degenerate days. The place—with some nice old houses on one side forming a covered piazza—is filled with blue blouses and white caps. Ducks, and turkeys, and chickens all quack, and gobble, and cluck unheard in

the great gabble that rises from so many strident human voices—all the world talking their loudest, and the bells clanging out from the tower of the fine old church : a bewildering maddening turmoil. The din is not to be escaped from either in the inns, which are crammed with market-people eating, drinking, and bargaining over their cups : stout men with mealy voices discussing fat beeves, and oily dames with funny, stunted-looking lace caps—degenerate successors these last of the ancient towering head-gear. Everywhere about are bundles of live poultry, carried unceremoniously by their legs, protesting loudly in their shrillest voices, but the people who carry them are as much unconcerned as though they were so many bunches of onions.

But already the crowd is ebbing away from the market-place ; the market-women are counting up their stockings-full of five-franc pieces ; and the buyers with their loads are scrambling into their carts, into the diligence, or filing away in long procession to the railway-station. In the midst of all this hubbub, in which we have been wandering a little dazed and bewildered, somebody touches Tom on the shoulder. This somebody wears a blue blouse, a rough three-sous straw-hat, bound with an end of scarlet braid ; he is bronzed and burly, with something of the keen good-humoured air of the Norman horse-dealer.

"Well, Tom, old man!" he cries, "what are you doing along here?"

Tom stares at him for a moment in amazement.

"Why, it is Redmond," he cries at last ; "Redmond disguised as a French peasant. Have you come to meet your father and Hilda?"

Redmond changed colour at this.

"No," he cried in an alarmed tone. "Are they here?"

"We are expecting to come across them any minute," replied Tom.

"Oh, I say, hide me up somewhere," cried Redmond ; "I could not face the old governor just now on any account."

"Don't be frightened," said Tom dryly ; "your old nurse wouldn't know you even."

Redmond, however, insisted that we should follow him to his own house-of-call, a little auberge "Au Bouche d'Or," where, through a labyrinth of market-carts, he led us to a little café and *salle-à-manger*, redolent of rum, and cognac, and garlic.

We had left Madame la Directrice and Justine at the hotel to repose during the noon tide heat, and Contango was discussing

his oats with great relish in the stables below them. We had determined that if we found that Hilda and her father had driven on to Bayeux, as there was now no pressing need to follow them, Contango should be spared any further work, and that Tom should remain at Carentan for the night, and drive quietly over to Bayeux next day, while the rest of us went on by train this same afternoon. We should be there as soon as the Chudleighs, no doubt, if they were going to drive the distance, and as the train did not leave for a couple of hours, we could spare an hour to Redmond with easy minds. As for Redmond, he was too full of his own affairs to take much interest in ours. It seems that he had been living at Caen, a second Beau Brummell, idle and out at elbows, pretty well supplied with money, however, by his sister, who must have devoted most of the income left her by the late Miss Chudleigh, of Weymouth, to his benefit. Of a more stirring nature than the unfortunate Brummell, however, he had struck out a line for himself. It was buying poultry, and pigs, and horses, anything he came across, and selling them again for a profit. That was his programme, at least ; hitherto he had been rather unfortunate. He had begun with horses, and had lost money over them ; had come down to pigs, and still lost money. Now he was reduced to poultry, but was always sanguine of eventual results. To-day, for instance, he had bought a hundred turkeys at five francs each ; these he should take back to Caen, and sell for about double the money.

Tom took in all this with wonder and amazement. Was this the glass of fashion and the mould of form, the Adonis of the Guards' Club, the arbiter of Pall Mall? Had he come down to this? In the prime of his days, too, and of his manly beauty, for he was handsome—handsomer than ever, perhaps, in the easy unstudied garb of Gaul, in the blue tunic that Vercingetorix might have worn with just such an air. He was too proud, evidently, to build any expectations upon his sister's marriage. Tom gently touched upon this point, and to his surprise Redmond seemed quite in the dark as to the whole matter. Hilda had certainly written to him once or twice lately, but he had given over reading letters ; he no longer took any interest in home matters. Hilda might marry whom she pleased. Tom suggested that this indifference was rather unkind, seeing that Hilda's marriage had been arranged partly for his benefit. Had

he heard nothing about Mr. Chancellor's handsome offer to give him, Redmond, a good appointment? Redmond opened his eyes at this, and taking a bundle of letters from the pocket of his blouse, picked out the most recent of them, from Hilda, and read it carefully over. Then he sat for a few moments in deep thought.

"Yes, that might do," he said at last, the expression of his face changing to a careless listlessness. "Perhaps it will suit me better than pig-dealing after all. Only I can't meet the governor and Hilda and her young man in this kind of costume," looking at his blue blouse. "Look here, Tom, lend me fifty pounds, and I'll run up to Paris and get rigged out, and then I'll meet the family council, say at Trouville."

Tom looked doubtfully into his purse, and said he did not know if he could manage it, but I gave him a nudge to intimate that I would take the responsibility, and then Tom counted out the notes, which Redmond thrust carelessly into his pocket.

"Thanks," he said calmly; "and now come along, Tom, we'll have a bit of fun with the turkeys."

Tom was always ripe for anything in the way of fun, and perhaps he felt that he was entitled to something in return for the money he had parted with so readily, and he followed Redmond to the courtyard of the inn, where the latter disentangled his cart from the tightly-packed mass of vehicles, and bringing out his pony from the stable, put it in and harnessed it with Tom's ready assistance. At the bottom of the cart were lying the turkeys, not, perhaps, a hundred—in that matter, probably, Redmond used a little customary exaggeration, but anyhow a goodly number tied together in pairs by the legs; and whatever their motives might have been, it was certainly a work of humanity when Tom and Redmond drew out their knives and cut the ligatures that bound them.

"Now we're off," said Redmond, jumping into the cart, Tom clambering up on the other side, and away they went at full speed.

For the first few moments not one of the turkeys stirred; they could not feel their legs, perhaps, just at first, or realise the unaccustomed liberty they enjoyed. But just as they cleared the porte cochère of the inn, the ostler running after them to claim the gratuity that Redmond had forgotten, the trap gave a lurch, and a fine old turkey-cock, thrown off his balance by the shock, spread out his wings, and

finding nothing to restrain him, flew out of the cart with a mighty whirr right in the face of the pursuing garçon, who clutched him wildly and then rolled over and over in the dust. And then bird after bird took to flight, their wings darkening the air, and bringing the whole town out in hot pursuit; dogs barked, women screamed, while the birds careered in all directions, settling on the roofs of houses, perching on the telegraph-wires, fluttering into shops, and even flying into the windows of the mairie and scattering the municipal records in wild confusion. Tom and Redmond meantime drove on callously regardless of the cries and shouts that followed them, and taking not the slightest notice of the train of flying birds they left behind. Strange to say, notwithstanding this wonderful windfall of turkeys, not a soul thought of looting, or of seizing the goods that fortune had so bounteously provided. Such is the respect that the French citizens bear for the law, that not a single turkey was, so to say, nobbled. Each man contented himself with defending his own possessions and calling loudly for the gendarmes.

Soon the alarm-bell was ringing at the gendarmerie, and the men turned out in a body. And it was pleasant to hear the sabres clanking and to see the cocked hats making head against the invaders. Under the protection of the law, everybody now joined in the capture; but it was melancholy to see that as each bird was caught its legs were firmly tied up again and it was carried off head downwards to the gendarmerie. Not all, indeed, were thus accounted for. A few had made their way over the tops of the houses, and were lost to sight. Meantime the chief of the gendarmes got out pen, ink, and paper, and began to "dress" a procès-verbal of the affair. It was a serious matter, he observed, to disturb the tranquility of a community in this unheard-of manner. Justice must inform itself.

Clearly it might be dangerous for Tom to show himself in Carentan after this madcap piece of business.

Anyhow, the pair had disappeared, and I made my way into the market-place, determined, now that the uproar had abated and the fierce noon-tide heat, that I would find out whether Hilda and her father were still in the town. The most likely place to find Hilda, I thought, would be the church. She had the usual fondness

of English girls for investigating churches and public monuments, and I should probably find her sketching some old portal, or perhaps in the cool interior, listening in a kind of day-dream to the subdued clamour of the Gregorian plain-song. The bell had just ceased ringing for vespers as I entered the church, and a small assemblage of worshippers was scattered about among the chairs: a few elaborately-dressed women, the wives, no doubt, of local magnates; some market-women in highly-coloured shawls and short petticoats; and one or two aged peasants in threadbare and carefully-patched blouses—these last the most fervent and devout of the whole assemblage, even including the officiating priest, who required an occasional pinch of snuff to help him on with his breviary. But more to my purpose, I espied, leaning against a column that cut off further view, the grey, time-worn head of the old squire. Hilda must be there too, beyond the pillar, but I could not get near enough to see without disturbing the whole congregation, and so I waited patiently till the service—a very short one—was finished.

Most of the people had left the church, but a few were still left, kneeling about here and there, and the squire still kept his seat. I edged round the church towards the pillar. The squire had surely fallen asleep, leaning his withered, tired-looking face against the cold stone-work. But he was alone, no Hilda was there, and the knowledge of this gave me a certain thrill of undefinable misgiving. I touched the squire on the arm. He roused himself and turned to me with an air of bland enquiry. No, he had not been asleep, but had closed his eyes for a few minutes in reflection. He walked with me towards the door, looking a little dazed and bewildered after his nap. His memory seemed to have failed him for the moment. He hardly knew where he was, or to whom he was speaking. "Hilda," he replied vaguely, in answer to my enquiry; "I don't quite know where she is—in the garden, or perhaps down in the village," just as if we had been at Combe Chudleigh. And then he seemed to gather his faculties together, sitting down in the porch and holding his forehead in his hands. "Yes, I think she's gone out," he repeated; "gone out with that young Frenchman to see some abbey, but I don't know where."

It was maddening to be thus thwarted by the old man's failing memory, for I was

now seriously alarmed about Hilda. Not that perhaps she could come to any actual harm, but that the count might lead her into some embarrassing or compromising position, the heroine of some story that would be told of her during all the rest of her life. Heaven only knew what trick he might play her; misinterpreting, perhaps, the free and independent bearing of an English girl, and taking advantage of the purity and unsuspicion of her nature.

By this time the old squire had come to a more lively sense of the situation; he began to grumble out that it was getting late, and that it was too bad of Hilda to keep him waiting so long. When we got back to the inn we found no tidings of Hilda. And now Madame la Directrice was becoming uneasy. When should we rejoin the yacht and her dear Alphonse? And that charming Monsieur Tom, where was he, and why was not everything ready for departure? But Justine drew me aside with a mysterious air. She had news of mademoiselle. She had driven off with M. de St. Pol; he had hired fresh horses, and had taken her away—away to the forest. Yes, she had found that out from the people of the inn. There was some old abbey to be visited. What could mademoiselle see in those old abbeys that were no longer fit for human habitation? But this was at Cérisy, in the very middle of the forest. Ah, why did mademoiselle leave her faithful servant behind, who would have protected her from all these dangers?

After all, Justine seemed to have hit upon the truth, for the squire, when again interrogated, seemed to recognise the name Cérisy as that which his daughter had told him. The place, too, might be called on the road to Bayeux, although it was a long way out of the direct line. Our trusty aide, Tom, having failed us at this pinch—not exactly from his own fault, for how could he have anticipated any unpleasant result from the pleasant adventure of the turkeys?—and I being left to my own resources, I persuaded Madame la Directrice to accept the escort of the old squire, and packed them off—Justine very unwillingly making one of the party—by the next train to Bayeux. And then I got Contango harnessed and put in the dog-cart, and started off at a slapping pace for Cérisy.

Through pleasant, English-looking country, flat and fertile, with many streams, bridges, and turnings, evening shadows coming on and the setting sun gleaming in

the waters, now bank-high from the rising tide—through all this I drove, not thinking much about the scenery or surroundings, but engrossed by the one thought, how to reach Hilda and take her away from that recreant count. Happily the trail was clear enough. At each stopping-place where I paused to give Contango a rest and wash out his mouth with cider-and-water, I heard of the phaeton with its pair of horses and the young man with the beard, and the tall young lady. But no one had seen them returning. The way seemed interminable, with cross-roads constantly baffling me, and more than once I missed the way and had to drive back. All the world seemed sunk into repose—the birds had retired to rest with immense twitterings, and were silent, but for a nightingale which now and then piped melodiously from a thicket. And then the little village came upon me almost by surprise, calm and tranquil as if life no longer moved there, in a green valley, while standing grey and clear in majestic solitude rose the old abbey church, solid and stern—of the true Norman build, the handiwork of the old Norman dukes—standing there like some veteran who has outlived his world, solitary and sad.

Something seemed to have kept the village awake, for several people were about. At the door of the little café stood a servant in a strange hat. That was enough. I knew that the count was not far off, although the man very respectfully but insincerely assured me that he did not know where his master had gone. The church, too, where I first went, was empty, a faint light glowing about its massive columns, and not a soul anywhere to be seen. The people, too, whom I asked seemed strangely constrained and silent.

It was possible that M. de St. Pol might have been there; he had property in the neighbourhood. Indeed, he had a house in the wood close by. And soon I was thundering at the door of this little house in the wood. But there was no one there but a deaf old woman, who to satisfy me showed me into every nook and corner. All was ready for the count, for nobody knew whether he might not come at any moment. But not as yet—no, he had not come as yet, croaked the old woman.

And then, at my wits' end, going back to the village I saw a little group gathered in the street about a couple of men in picturesque rags, two sheep with curling horns, and a little girl with a tambourine

slung behind her. The little performance was soon over—the countrywomen about here were not afraid of sheep, and handled and examined them quite familiarly. And when the performance was over the little brown girl crept quietly up to me and whispered: "You are looking for the tall mademoiselle; come after me and I will show you where she is gone." And so I followed the child, leading Contango by the bridle. "We must be quick, for she walks fast," cried the girl, and as soon as we passed out of the village I lifted the child into the cart, and drove on under her guidance. At the next turn of the road I saw a figure which brought my heart into my mouth. It was Hilda, rising tall against the evening sky, walking resolutely along, while a little behind her a masculine figure seemed to have difficulty in keeping up with her, while he addressed all kinds of remonstrances, tender and indignant, without eliciting a reply. At the sound of wheels behind her, Hilda turned and looked eagerly and intently towards me. Next moment I had reached her and leaped down to her side, throwing the reins to the gipsy girl. Hilda gave one long look.

"Oh, Frank," she cried, "you have come at last!" and she began to tremble violently while I supported her in my arms. "There, I am all right now," she said, releasing herself from my embrace. "And now, Frank, send that man away," with a look of scorn and aversion in the direction of M. de St. Pol.

A gesture was sufficient, the count turned to depart, when, overcome by anger, I slashed him across the shoulders with the whip. He turned upon us, white with suppressed passion.

"You will answer for that blow with your life, monsieur," he cried.

"Don't fear him," cried the little gipsy; "I will be your friend, monsieur," and she slipped down from the cart, and disappeared in the forest.

AN ALIBI AND ITS PRICE.

A STORY IN THIRTEEN CHAPTERS.

BY THEO GIFT.

CHAPTER V.

POOR Hetty felt as if she had been struck dumb. It was one of those crises in which the very injustice and absurdity of the situation seem to make speech or defence alike impracticable, at the very moment when both are most needed.

She wanted to answer this man, to silence him and put him down; and, instead, his flow of words and assurance together so took away her breath, that she seemed to have no words in which to reply to him. To listen to him, anyone would have thought that there was some private understanding between them, and that of such a nature as to justify Mrs. Pentreath's worst accusations.

Yet, on the other hand, though Captain Pentreath's words, looks, and manner were all those of a lover (and what can be easier than for a girl of spirit to dismiss an unwelcome lover?), this particular girl could not help feeling keenly that there was not one of them which might not be made to wear another interpretation, which might not, indeed, have quite another explanation if he chose to put it on them.

It was her old difficulty, and yet something must be done to put a stop to this sort of thing, and that at once. It still wanted nearly an hour to breakfast time, and he had said that Mrs. Pentreath would be late that morning. It was fine and bright, too, with a white frost glittering on the short thin grass of the Green, and on the dark shining leaves of the laurels and laurustinus bushes in the gardens of the old-fashioned red-brick houses skirting it. Low down in the east a big wintry sun was just struggling from above a network of clouds, grey and rose-colour, with crimson streaks between. The great iron gates of Kew Gardens were glittering in the sunbeams, and the tall trees beyond stood out like a spider's web, in the delicate tracery of their leafless boughs, against the blue sky. Hetty stopped short, looking her companion full in the face, and trying to keep down the colour in her own, as she said :

"I must ask you not to speak of Mr. Hamilton in that way, Captain Pentreath. You are quite wrong. He never made mischief between your mother and me. It is you, whether you mean it or not, who are doing so by following me about in this manner, and trying to speak to me in private, when I have shown you as plainly as I can that I do not like it; and when you must know that your doing so causes her to say harsh and bitter things to me."

"Harsh things to you! Hetty, I never knew it. Fancy anyone—my mother especially—speaking harshly to such a dear little fairy! I wish I had heard her, that's

all. She would never have done so a second time."

Hetty winced. Would nothing check him, or show him that it was herself as well as his mother that he was displeasing, and why, why had she not tried to do so from the beginning? She remembered distinctly now, a previous occasion when he had called her a fairy. He had done it in a playful good-natured way, as she sprang up to reach for a spray of light-coloured autumn leaves they were passing on their walk, and she had not even frowned, thinking nothing of it; but now— She made a great effort, and said quietly :

"That is nonsense, Captain Pentreath, and I wish you would leave off talking it and go home. I would rather not walk with you."

Ernest laughed and said :

"That is rude, Miss Mavors—at least it would be if I believed you; but, fortunately, I don't, and therefore I like you a great deal too well to obey."

At that Hetty fairly lost her temper, and answered hotly that she did mean it; that if she had had the least idea he would have followed her, she would have stayed at home, and that, if he persisted in it, that was what she must do in future. She got up early to go to church and say her prayers, not for foolishness and—and flirting. Which last word she jerked out, remembering how good she had been in refusing to linger even with her betrothed, and then blushed up like a rose. Ernest took advantage of the blush, and said innocently :

"Flirting! Good Heavens, who is flirting? Not I, I assure you." And getting no answer, shrugged his shoulders with an injured air, and remarked in plaintive sotto voce : "And all this because I didn't keep tryst yesterday. I never thought Queen Esther had it in her to be so savage with her poor subjects."

"Captain Pentreath," said Hetty firmly, "if you had come yesterday you would have heard the same; and the only difference would have been that I should have stayed at home to-day. You are talking as if I had come out in obedience to some hint of yours; but I did no such thing; and instead of playing into your hands to deceive your mother, as you seem to think I am capable of doing, I was more deceived than she was; for I never suspected you of having made any plan, or thrown out any hint at all; and,

from what you say, she did. I do not want to be rude to you, but you force me to speak plainly, and I cannot avoid it."

"My dear Miss Hetty," said Ernest smoothly (but Heaven help the woman who could provoke the expression in his eyes which lighted them at that moment!), "you could not be rude if you tried, and your plain-speaking is adorable. Will you think me very rude, however, if I suggest that this virtuous reprobation of my society is rather a new phase in a young lady, who until the present time not only showed no aversion to it, but rather encouraged—I suppose I may not say suggested—my accompanying her to St. Gudule's and back of a morning?"

Poor Hetty blushed furiously, but said, though in a faltering voice, that that was a long time ago, before she knew Mrs. Pentreath disapproved of it.

"Then," said Ernest, more smoothly, still, "it is she who disapproves of my company for you—not you; and she who makes plans to deceive you—not I, who only try to protect you from them! But, indeed," with a subtle change of tone which somehow made Hetty shrink, "I fear both she and I are only being made the scapegoats for somebody else in this matter. You were wonderfully warm in defending my cousin George just now—and I see you can colour at his name. Is it at all possible that he is the cause of this change, and that in throwing me over you want to secure him?" And this he uttered with such a sudden blaze of anger and contempt, as seemed to imply that the mere idea that anyone who "having known him could decline" on such a "lower nature" as that of the vicar of St. Gudule's, was a possibility too derogatory to a woman to be even mentioned without disdain.

In truth, it was more than he himself could contemplate with anything like calmness. A moment back he had been really debating within himself whether the girl were only a timid goose, frightened out of her wits by his mother's severity, or a clever little coquette, making use of the latter to draw him on to a proposal; and on both these suppositions he had felt more than half inclined to let her alone and to trouble himself no more about her. The bare idea, however, that there might be a rival in the field, and that rival the cousin whom he less than liked already, was enough to rouse his vanity in an

instant, and determined him not to let her slip without a struggle.

True, for aught he knew, George Hamilton might mean to marry her, while he had not the smallest intention of doing anything of the sort; but that had nothing to do with the matter. He had descended to patronise the girl and "bring her out," as he called it, and in return he looked on her as his exclusive property, and believed in all good faith that she cherished a warm and tender admiration for him, which all her shyness and sauciness could not wholly conceal.

Under these circumstances, to have her play him false, or stand by and see another man appropriate her without making it as disagreeable as possible for both of them, was out of the question.

For a moment, indeed, he waited, hoping and expecting that she would indignantly deny the insinuation he had so contemptuously thrown out; but anger and jealousy were mounting higher with each instant, and when he found that she made no answer save by the rich colour which mantled in her face, he could restrain himself no longer, and burst into a torrent of reproaches directed against her fickleness and falsehood, and bitter enough to drive the blood out of the girl's cheeks.

She faced round upon him at last in desperation, repeating the words after him:

"Fickle! False! How can you say such things? When was I either, or how could I be—to you? You have been kind to me and friendly, and I was grateful to you. I liked you; but you are destroying all that. I shall never like you any more. I could never even wish to see you if you speak to me in this way."

"You mean that you like Master George better, or rather that you think the well-to-do parson in possession is better than a poor soldier with expectations only. Hetty, I would not have believed it of you. I thought you were an innocent, loving girl—one who could care for me as much as I did for her."

"And that could be very little," cried Hetty. The girl's spirit was thoroughly roused, and she turned her lovely face on him, flashing with scorn and quite unsoftened by the would-be tenderness of his last appeal. "If you cared for me in the least, you would not insult me, a fatherless girl, as you are doing now. But it shall never happen again. I see to-day how

right your mother was in trying to keep us apart, and when I get back I will tell her so. She shall not think that I, at any rate, am deceiving her; and as for Mr. Hamilton— But there! it does not matter what you say of him or of me either, and he would care for it as little as I do."

There are men, insignificant and unimportant looking in general, whom real honest anger so improves and dignifies that when under its influence they acquire a warmth and nobility of expression which in a way transfigures and elevates them even in the eyes of their enemies; and there are others, good-looking ones too, whom, on the other hand, anger deforms and defaces, bringing out all manner of mean and cruel lines which the smooth and handsome features usually obliterate, and making the whole man dwindle into something low and despicable.

It happened in this latter way with Ernest Pentreath. His face grew white and damp, a livid unwholesome white, beneath the lash of Hetty's scorn, and there was a dangerous glitter in his eyes as they met hers, a narrowed, darkling look before which the young girl shrank in involuntary terror.

"So—o—o!" he said slowly, the word coming like a harsh breath through his teeth. "That is the tune, is it? and Miss Mavors shows herself in her true colours! Ernest Pentreath was good enough to flirt with and use as a cavalier and attendant when there was no one else to the fore; or, better still, when some one else was wanted to be brought to the fore. After that, 'Le roi est mort; vive le roi!' He may go to the deuce, and someone else reign in his stead. Well, Miss Mavors, 'tis an old enough game, and young as you are, you seem to be an old player at it; for upon my soul I've rarely seen it carried out more coolly and skilfully. May I congratulate myself as well as your new lover on our joint share in the pretty play, and do you think he will be offended if I offer him the testimony of my small personal experience as to the warmth and liberality of your disposition? His own used to be of a slightly jealous, not to say churlish cast in these matters, if I remember rightly; but I suppose he has got over all that foolishness now."

Hetty looked up. The flush had quite died out of her face, and her great dark eyes looked dim and distended with a kind of horrified incredulity; the look of one

who in a dream sees looming on her some terrible and repulsive vision, from which she tries but cannot escape.

"Oh," she said with a sort of gasp between the words, "you do not mean that. It cannot be you who are speaking in that way. Yes, I know you are angry, and you have been saying wicked, false, unjust things to me—things you know to be unjust—and I cannot help it. I cannot silence you; but you would not say them to other people, to—to Mr. Hamilton! Even you could not be base enough for that."

Captain Pentreath smiled—not pleasantly.

"Even I!" he repeated. "You are polite, Miss Mavors, and yet I think it was you who first suggested talking to 'other people,' and making capital out of my mistaken endeavour to give you pleasure, by misrepresenting me to my mother! Don't you think, after that, the less we say about baseness the better?"

Hetty was silent. The bad dream seemed thickening around her, and making everything seem unreal and phantom-like to her. Was this—could this be the pleasant, playful, softly-speaking young officer whose grace and devotion had made a little queen of her for a few short weeks! Her hands grew cold, and her eyes misty with a sort of blank despair which might have touched even Ernest Pentreath, cruel as an angry man can be to a woman who has slighted him, had he been looking at her. As it was, his heart did give him an unpleasant twinge when she turned towards him, a sudden, pathetic courage shining out of the altered lines of her pale, innocent face.

"No," she said sadly, "you are right; it is no good saying anything to you; and to other people you must say what you like. You will not hurt me with those who know me; and with others it does not matter. Only let me tell you one thing. Mr. Hamilton has done nothing to injure you in any way. If he had thought that you or I cared for each other he would have kept away himself, and tried to help us, instead of helping to keep us apart; but it was not so. I was your friend when I did not know what a bad, cowardly man you were; but he was an older friend by far; and if I liked him better than you, as I did—and do—it was because I knew even then that he was a better man and more worth liking. Say what you please to him. You cannot have anything to say

that he does not know; and he will only despise you for saying that."

It was a brave speech. Indeed, the girl was strung up to that pitch where despair becomes recklessness; but it was an unfortunate bravery all the same, for it banished what little compunction the sight of her white face had awakened in Captain Pentreath's breast. No man, no soldier especially, likes to be told that he is a coward, even by so insignificant a being as a little girl whom he has thought to honour by his notice, and the fact that the same suggestion had been more than hinted to him by other parties, and in another land, rather added venom to the wound than helped to deaden it. The mocking pitiless sneer with which he turned on his young companion had something in it far worse than the curse which good-breeding stifled on his lips.

"Say—what?" he asked with an admirable affectation of surprise. "I really beg your pardon, my dear Miss Hetty, but I'm afraid I don't understand you, or what you are referring to by this very heroic speech of yours! So far from quarrelling with my worthy cousin, or injuring you in any way, I had no thought in my mind, I assure you, but of congratulating him on having won the affections of a very clever and charming young lady, and one who, I have found, can be as tender and seductive as the most exacting of swains could desire. Surely there is nothing to offend you in that; and as far as quarrelling with George, why should I when he has not injured me? Of course I admire you intensely. You don't need me to keep on telling you that, I hope; but I'm not a marrying man. To be so implies a large income nowadays, and I am too poor to afford anything but the lesser bliss of an innocent little flirtation; so if George doesn't grudge me the skimmed cream of that, I won't grudge him the wholesome milk of matrimony beneath. Nay, I'll be more generous than you think, and will even if entreated make over to him such relics of my 'good times' as other men might be tempted to keep—photographs, I mean, and such like."

Hetty had been hurrying onward, her steps quickening with every word, and her head turned resolutely away in the effort not to hear them. On one thing she was determined—not to answer him. Let him say what he liked, George would believe her, not him, she kept repeating to herself; and that being so, what did such a man's

insults, however stinging in their bitter irony, signify? But the last part of his sentence so startled her that she forgot her determination of silence, and flashed suddenly round on him a pair of lovely scornful eyes as she said :

"You must possess such relics before you can be generous with them, Captain Pentreath; and you have none in this case—neither photographs nor anything else."

"No?" he said, his pale angry face breaking into a smile of triumph at having forced her to speak. "Yet I think this is rather like you. I understood it was a portrait of you at any rate," and he took from an inside pocket of his coat a photograph folded up in tissue-paper, which he unwrapped and held up to her. The effect was not what he expected.

"That?" she said with a little relieved laugh. "Yes, that is me, certainly; but I never gave it you, as you know. It was in my album a week ago, and you must have stolen it. I dare say Mr. Hamilton has heard of men doing that sort of thing before."

"And of writing—let me see, what is it? 'With best love, from E. M.' on the back of their trophies?" said Ernest as he slowly turned it round, and read the inscription on the back. "My dear Miss Hetty, no man could be rude enough to refuse to stand you out in anything you say, even though he—had stood by, as I am afraid you must remember I did, and saw you write the words you now deny; but is it safe to do so? Your handwriting is rather uncommon. Are you sure Hamilton is not acquainted with it?"

For a moment Hetty stood still, gazing at the written words, while the colour slowly died out of her face, and a hunted look came into it like that of some tortured animal.

"Of course he is, and I did write that," she said hoarsely; "but I never thought or dreamt it was on my photograph. You came across the room with one, and asked me to scribble those words on it. You said it was one of yours which you wanted to send to a friend by that post, but that you had sprained your finger. I knew you were called Ernest Meredith Pentreath, and I thought the 'E. M.' stood for the two first names. You meant me to think so, and you laid the card on the table face downwards. I never even saw the other side."

"Of course not! I see! That is how

it is to run. Surely it sounds a little too innocent though. I'm afraid Hamilton might be sceptical. He's not a man of much faith. Shall we try him, however?"

Hetty made no answer, but she looked at him, and perhaps that look, not so much of indignation as of silent, shuddering pity, smote nearer to Captain Pentreath's conscience than any speech could have done. To do him such small justice as he deserved, he had no thought in reality of carrying out his unmanly threats, or of showing George Hamilton the photograph he had so unfairly obtained. He was simply mad for the moment with temper and wounded vanity. Hetty had offended him, "thrown him over," and in the desire to punish her he went farther than he had intended. Even now, if she had humbled herself to plead with him, he would have relented and given her back the photograph; but it was too late. They were almost at the gates of Guelder Lodge, and springing from his side, Hetty hurried on so quickly that he had no chance even to overtake her till they reached the front door, where the butler was standing looking anxiously up and down the drive with a telegram in his hand. He came to meet them at once.

"Please, sir," he said "this has just come for you. I didn't know you were out, and was knocking at your door for some time before I thought of opening it. The boy's waiting for an answer."

Captain Pentreath tore it open impatiently. Telegrams were common things with him; but the next moment an exclamation of such fury and concern broke from his lips as even checked Hetty in her onward course.

"Tell the boy there's no answer. I'm going to town myself," she heard him say, as, still standing in the hall, he tore the paper in pieces. "And here, Hickson, bring me my frock-coat, and take this. Where is my ulster? Make haste, deuce take you! What is it? Back to breakfast? Certainly not. Didn't I say I was going to town? Tell your mistress so; and that I shall sleep there to-night."

He was gone with the last words, and Hetty saw his departure with a grateful heart; but how she got through the day that followed she hardly knew. She had meant to carry out her intention of speaking to Mrs. Pentreath before breakfast, but that lady had taken it into her head to breakfast in bed, and sent down word that she was very sleepy, and did not want to see Miss Mavors till she rang for her. Long

before that happened, however, poor Hetty was incapacitated from attending to anything. A maddening, terrible headache, the result of the overstrain on her nerves, had come on, and so held her in its merciless grasp that for the rest of the day she was fit for nothing but to lie motionless, and with face pressed down upon a sofa-pillow in a darkened room.

If George Hamilton had been there, he might have rested the throbbing temples on his breast, and soothed the pain with love's own healing of tender words and touches; but though he had promised to call during the day, he never came. By the rest of the household she was left in peace at any rate; Mrs. Pentreath contenting herself with sending up her maid now and then to see how the girl was, and make proffers of strong tea and the advice to go to bed as soon as she was able to move.

Hetty took both gratefully. She had been going to a party with her guardian that evening; but this headache put it out of the question, and Mrs. Pentreath departed alone, having first looked in on her protégée, and seen her tucked up in bed and apparently asleep.

Indeed, the girl was so in reality. Sleep had come on from utter exhaustion, and when she woke it was between ten and eleven o'clock, the pain was gone, and the house perfectly quiet. Hetty threw on her dressing-gown, and looked out of the window. Mrs. Pentreath had not returned, for she could see the great iron gates standing open in readiness for the carriage. The shadows of the cedar-branches swept softly to and fro upon the frost-white lawn, and from the housekeeper's room over the porch came a faint red glow, giving suggestion that the lady's-maid had fallen asleep over the fire whilst waiting for her mistress.

Hetty sat down and began to think. One thing was clear to her already—that she and Captain Pentreath could not live in the same house any longer. She would not make mischief between him and his mother. On reflection, she thought that would be hardly right, when it might be that her own thoughtlessness and imprudence had brought this trouble on her; but she would ask leave to go away for a little while to visit her mother's relatives, and—she would tell George Hamilton everything. Loving him as she did, she felt sure he would believe her if she could only be beforehand with Captain Pentreath, and

prevent her story being forestalled ; and at that thought a bright idea seized her—an idea which made her first start, and then flush and tremble all over.

Her photograph ! Without that basis to go on, George would hardly be likely even to listen to his cousin's boasts, and would it not be possible for her to get it even now ?

While taunting her with it, he had replaced it in his coat-pocket—the rough shooting-coat which he had changed so hurriedly before starting for town after the receipt of the telegram. Might it not be there still ? She felt almost sure that, in his haste and agitation, he had had neither time nor thought for shifting the contents of the pockets ; and, if not, what was there to prevent her slipping into his room and securing her property at once ? He was far away in London ; Mrs. Pentreath was at her party, with Hickson in attendance on her ; and the rest of the servants, with the exception of the lady's-maid, were in bed. Besides, her chamber was at some distance from the other sleeping-apartments. It was over the kitchen, and at the end of a long corridor, separated by a short flight of stairs and a baize door from the hall. On the opposite side of the latter, and facing the baize door, was what used to be called the garden-room, which Ernest had appropriated to himself. She had only to cross the hall, secure the photograph, and be back behind the shelter of that friendly portal in three minutes. Never could an idea seem happier or easier to carry out, and before another second she had proceeded to put it in execution, and was soon hunting about in the moonlight which flooded Captain Pentreath's room (blessed moon ! how she thanked it, for she dared not light the gas) for the object of her search.

Fortune favoured her. She had neither made or heard a sound as she glided softly through the sleeping house ; and now, almost the first thing she saw was the coat for which she was seeking. It was hanging over the back of a chair, where Hickson had left it ; and as the girl plunged her cold, trembling fingers into the pockets, she well-nigh uttered a cry of delight. At only the second dive they closed over something with a smooth, flat surface which instinct told her was the object of her quest ; and she was just drawing it to the surface, her heart beating joyfully, and her

mouth rippling with a little mischievous laugh, when she stopped short, the mirth frozen suddenly upon her lips, and her distended eyes fixed in a glassy horrible stare as she became aware of a certain low sound at once startling and familiar to her—the faint, grating noise of a latch-key in the front door.

And there was no one in that house who had a latch-key except Captain Pentreath !

For a second—less, perhaps, but it seemed an eternity to her—the girl stood still, struck numb and motionless with the very horror of her position. She had thought him miles away, that there was no chance even of his returning till next day, and now—what should she—what could she do ? To escape was impossible. Before she could cross the hall he would be in it. To be found there, in his room, at night, would be worse than death. The mere thought made the girl's senses reel and sicken. She felt as if she were going to faint. Her breath came short and suffocatingly. Her eyes swam and darkened. Already the front door was opened, letting in a current of frosty air, which even penetrated to where she stood, when, before it closed, a Heaven-sent idea occurred to her. There were two cupboards in the room—a hanging one, and a dark, roomy place, with a sloping roof, and half filled with boxes. It was not likely Captain Pentreath would want to go to it. She doubted if he had ever done so ; and while he was still wiping his boots on the door-mat, and lighting a candle at the hall gas, Hetty had crossed the room with one swift, silent spring, had glided into the refuge aforementioned, and was crouching inside it, her body crushed against the door which opened inwardly ; and her two hands pressed above her heart, as if to still the frantic beating which seemed as if it must be audible throughout the house.

He was in the room now, but she was safe—safe, thank Heaven ! and the thought had not yet come to her how she was to get free again.

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